

From Art Teacher to Cake Pop Artist with Becca Aronowitz

David Crabill: Welcome to the Forrager podcast where I talk with cottage food businesses about their strategies for running a food business from home. I'm David Crabill. And today I'm talking with Becca Aronowitz. Becca lives in Richmond Hill, Georgia and sells cake pops with her cottage food business, [Sweet Whimsy Shop](#).

Now, when I say cake pops, these are not your ordinary cake pops. We're talking, hand sculpted, custom shaped and designed cake pops. And if you [check out her website](#), which I strongly encourage you to do, you will see that every single one of her cake pop designs looks amazing. With almost a decade of experience running this business.

I don't think it's a stretch to say that Becca has become an exceptional cake pop artist. So I'm really looking forward to getting the inside scoop on how Becca has grown her business and honed her skills over the years. And with that welcome to the show, Becca. Nice to have you here.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:00:57] Thanks, David. And thanks for the kind words. I appreciate it.

David Crabill: [00:01:01] Yeah. Well, as I said, the work that you do stands out. And I was just looking at your website yesterday and your Facebook page, and you can just see, I really couldn't find a bad cake pop design in there. So, as I said, you know, the work you do currently is very impressive and, Uh, you know, I know that you've, you've become very well known for your cake pops, but I wanna roll back to the beginning of your business and just take us back to how you got started with this business.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:01:33] Yeah, sure. I, I was teaching middle school at the time and was on fall break. two, no winter break, 2010. And bought [Bakerella's book, Cake Pops](#). I just liked the photography of it and I kind of liked dabbling in different. Different craft things. I'm not super Craftsy, but, um, I really like books and learning new skills.

And so over winter break, I bought the book and I tried my hand at one of the cake. I think just the basic round cake pop. And then made my first real set for a teacher friend of mine in January. She had a birthday and she was having a mouse problem in her classroom. And I made mouse cake pops for her.

And, uh, it just, I was excited about the sculptural form, you know, to move from the round sphere shape to something that was, was an object other than a round cake pop. so I did that, that was January of 2011 was still teaching full time. and I had a jewelry business on the side and kind of alongside that.

I would, I would I go to craft shows and bring cake pops? I would sell jewelry would be kind of the main reason I was there, but the cake pops always sold out fastest. So I continued to do that for about a year. And at the end of teaching, spring of 2011, I made the decision to leave teaching. There had been some administration changes, some things going on within the state that affected education.

And I just was not comfortable working in that environment. So I left teaching and needed to supplement the income. So I started sweet whimsy shop. I'm trying to get my dates, right? No, this is 2012, I left teaching. So it was a good, probably 18 months of just sort of making cake pops maybe a couple times a month, not a lot.

And then I went full, full time in fall of 2012. Um, opened up an Etsy shop. I think October was when it was at least that's when I got my first sale. I looked this morning to see and, um, Yeah, I've been doing that full time for almost eight years now.

David Crabill: [00:03:50] so you, yeah, you definitely were not anywhere close to full time when you decided to, or not even full time, but you weren't making that much money with this side hobby when you decided to leave your teaching job.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:04:02] No, it was a big, big leap of faith. I really did it because, you know, I had a degree in teaching most of my. Background and skillset was related to being a teacher and it can kind of be hard to, to get a different job outside of education. so cake pops was, I'll do this because we have bills to pay.

And, this seems like a good fit and, uh, Etsy, really yeah. I'm not on Etsy anymore. cause I don't ship, but, it was a great way to start my business. I did really well on there. learned, learned a lot just about running, running a small business from Etsy.

David Crabill: [00:04:42] Right now think about if you had tried to start your business without using Etsy, because the only issue with Etsy is that usually that doesn't fall under the cottage food law, it's very popular for people to use Etsy, and, you know, it's when you're getting started, like, it makes sense sometimes to just kind of turn a blind eye to whatever the laws say. And it's, it's just a nice, way to get some business. But I was wondering if you think about whether you had just decided to just go strictly legal and not use Etsy to ship nationwide, do you think that you would have been able to jumpstart your business and get it off the ground? and get it to the point where it is today?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:05:26] You know, I'd like to think that I could. When I stopped when I stopped shipping. So I'm pretty sure I stopped Etsy. And then I stopped shipping because I had a great enough client base that I didn't need Etsy, you know, to be paying the fees and stuff for Etsy. so I think I closed my shop down there and then eventually phased out shipping completely.

And so what I had to do, I did not have much of a client base in Savannah at all. It was like rebuilding my market. And so I had to, you know, I did a lot of popups. I contacted, event planners and wedding planners and just said, Hey, I'd like to give you a box of, you know, basically a sample box of some of my designs, some of my flavors.

Could I meet with you for. You know, five or 10 minutes and, tell you what I do. And that brought me some business. I think it was, it was a combination of, you know, just meeting with people locally, face to face, and then building. My brand on social media. I don't, I don't know if I would be where I am today if I had started exclusively like that.

But I think, I think it would happen within a few years. And there are some, like, I know I could still be on Etsy and I could still ship on Etsy, but it would only be within Georgia because Georgia does allow shipping within the state. so there are, there are ways that Etsy can accommodate your cottage food business, depending on what state you're in and what the laws are. I just, I don't want to deal with shipping right now.

David Crabill: [00:06:58] Yeah, that's true. I mean, you can technically use Etsy and just kind of, you know, I don't know, I want to say hack it, you know, try to try to make it work for the restrictions. But, Um, it's not really designed for the cottage food laws. Let's put it that way. Um, so it sounds like you. Have always kind of had a, an artsy background, like you even were doing the jewelry thing on the side when you were teaching. And then you're interested in cake pops just to kind of like do something for fun. I, it sounds like you weren't trying to start a business. So is that accurate to say.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:07:34] It is I've. I have been, I guess, artsy all my life. I can remember my mom saying when I was growing up. If you don't. If you don't have a creative career, you're not going to be happy. And I found that to be true. So creating, yeah, making art, and for me, cake pops are a form of art, but, That was, that was my passion. And in grade school, high school, when I went to college, I got a degree in art and education and ended up teaching art. So it's just, it's very much a part of, I guess my identity. Yeah. I'm, I'm very pretty high strung, type A, OCD. So I'm maybe not with what people would stereotype as an artist. But that's, I, I love to create,

David Crabill: [00:08:22] Well, the art definitely comes through in your work. And it's very clear that you got a nice eye for design and, it's, I, I do want to ask if. I think it's one thing to be an artist, you know, where you like to create things you like to create new designs. And then it's another thing to transition that into something that's a business because you're creating cake pops, hundreds and hundreds of times sometimes over and over again.

And so do you feel like sometimes that can sap the creativity or the fun out of it? Does that get less fun when you made it a business or is it still fun for you to make these cake pops?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:09:06] I think right now it's still fun. There are parts of it that I don't love, like the actual making the cake. And so I'll bake the cake and. Prep everything. And I'll actually, pre-roll like pre measure the cake balls, even if they're going to be shaped into something totally different than a sphere, but that helps me count them out for the week and go, okay, you know, this, this cake made 36 cake balls. I don't love that part at all. What I do love is, you know, connecting with the clients when they pick up and seeing how excited they are about whatever I've created for them. Um, there are some designs that I just love making.

It's more. Yeah, it's more the stuff that's not, not the creative stuff that comes with the job. like the cake baking and cake rolling. It's just pretty tedious, but. The end result. Yeah. I'm so focused on the end result that I think it's not that bad. You endure it would be great to have some sort of, you know, a staff situation where I've got someone who does that. And I could just focus exclusively on the creative aspect, but that's just not where I'm at right now. So

David Crabill: [00:10:12] yeah. And I'd like by the end of the episode, to get into what you would like you where you'd like to head with this business, but let's. Talk first about your cake pops themselves. And just generally speaking, how do you make a cake pop?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:10:29] Sure. So I will bake a sheet cake. I personally do everything from scratch, but I know that a lot of cake pop makers use box cake mixes, and that works for them. I just prefer the taste of scratch baked cakes. I'll make just a sheet cake, fully bake it, let it cool. I often just let it cool overnight.

I'll put saran wrap over the top of the pan and, um, let it cool. And then the next day I'll mix it with, A scratch made frosting. Again, some people use a canned frosting for me I prefer the homemade taste. So if you envision yeah. Essentially taking a cupcake, so the cake and the frosting, and then putting it in a mixer and mixing those two up, that's basically what I do with the sheet cake and the frosting, but, with much less frosting, um, than what you would see on a cupcake.

And I mix the two together so that it makes a pliable like dough, even though it's fully cooked. And then I'll roll that massive dough into small little cake balls and count those up and use those as the base for whatever it is I'm going to sculpt. Like if it's just a round cake ball, then or a round cake pop, I'll just roll that, you know, kind of ball of cake dough into a perfect sphere.

And put it on a stick, dip it in chocolate, let that cool. maybe decorate it with sprinkles or some other detail. Um, if there's something that's more, I'm trying to think of some of the shapes that I've done. I mean, it could be something simple, like a bear, which is just basically around cake pop with a couple of M and Ms stuck in there before you dip it in chocolate.

And then you put some details on there with more chocolate, or I can't even think. Anything that's sculpted. I mean, I, everything that I bake and then I make into a cake pop I've hand sculpted into whatever shape you see. Sometimes you use add-ons like M&Ms or pieces of candy to maybe make the horns on a dinosaur or something like that. But it's all inside. It's pretty much all cake.

David Crabill: [00:12:35] And is that a typical process for making a cake pop, where you go from sheet cake to crumbly cake and creating this pliable mixture with some frosting and rolling it into balls.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:12:47] For the most part. Yes, there are. I've never used it, but, there are two other ways to make cake pops using cake pop molds in that. You there's electric cake, pop makers, almost like a waffle iron, where you would pour the cake batter into this hot iron that has these shallow. Half sphere shapes, and then it'll bake up into a perfect sphere.

Um, but there's no frosting involved in those. And then there's another method where you use it's the same principle, but you bake them in the oven in a pan that is cake ball shaped. So again, there's no frosting mixed with those. It's almost like a cupcake that has been baked instead of the shape of a cup into a little cake ball shape.

but you're pretty limited to just the. The round spheres, when you're done, you can't do any kind of sculpting with that. As far as I know the way I do it is the way I do it as the way that [Bakerella recommended it, in her book](#). And I think that's what most people do.

David Crabill: [00:13:51] Yeah. And so it gives you the ability to customize the designs. And I've seen a video of you doing this, so I kind of have a sense for how it works. But for a listener, can you describe like, like it's just some, maybe hard to imagine how you could create a design and we're talking about some pretty elaborate designs sometimes.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:14:13] it's, you know, some of my background is in sculpting. I, when I was in college, that was what I wanted my major to be. I ended up becoming a painting major, but the first couple of years I dabbled a lot in clay and different sculptural mediums. So I've got a background in that. Yeah. I just use my hands. I typically look at a picture. Of, you know, if it's a school bus, I'll look at a photo of a school bus or maybe I'll find clip art of a school bus that I like better and do my best to recreate that in 3D or sculptural form, depending on the design, I might do a sketch ahead of time, you know, with different views.

You know, here's this, the front, the side, the top, it just depends on how comfortable I feel replicating the design. Sometimes I need more preparatory work before that. Sadly there's I don't know how to communicate what I do

David Crabill: [00:15:06] Well, yeah, I think any listener is going to have to jump onto your website and check out the gallery page. I mean the gallery page shows literally hundreds of different designs that you've created. And not only that it's broken out into pricing and there are multiple tiers of different types of sculpted cake pops. I mean, it just keeps going up. So can talk a little bit about how you price these cake pops.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:15:34] Yeah, they, everything starts with just with the basic round set and those are set at \$27 a dozen. So \$2.25 a piece. And it increases there based on. So like if I'm just going to maybe use chocolate piping, it's still going to be a round cake ball, but all I'm going to do is put some drizzles on there that would add maybe 50 or 25 cents per cake pop.

Or if I'm using a little molded piece of chocolate, like, I just did roses for someone. So I used a candy mold and did molded roses and then stuck those onto the cake pop. that adds time. It adds supplies. So that typically adds another 25 cents per cake pop if I'm doing any kind of hand painting.

So basically every little addition that I add to that, I'll add usually 25 to 50 cents, if it's small. And then if it's an actual sculptural change, Like the sea horses. That's one of my most expensive designs that requires a ton of sculpting to bit of sculpting the cake dough. And then I add pieces on to that, and then I'm piping chocolate details and then brushing on a luster dust on top of that.

So it's really time consuming. And there's a level of skill involved that I've started charging for as well. You know, that I didn't earlier on in the business. but I, I don't know of anyone in my area that can offer some of the designs that I do offer just because that person hasn't

been making them as long as I have. So I feel justified in charging for the skill. In addition to the labor.

David Crabill: [00:17:19] Yeah, and I, you, I believe you should be very justified in what you're charging at the, the skill and the quality comes out. So what are we talking about in terms of pricing on the high end of your cake pops?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:17:32] The most, so far, the most expensive that I've done, that I can remember, are the seahorses, which are \$7, a piece \$84 a dozen. most of I'd say the average of what I sell hovers around 36 to \$45, a dozen, which is \$3 to \$3.50 a cake pop. And those are ones that are, they're not quite spheres, but they're not some kind of crazy design that might be something that's like a bear or actually pulling up my gallery right now

David Crabill: [00:18:03] I know it can be hard to remember sometimes when, especially when you've done so many of them.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:18:09] I've done. Yeah, I've done a lot. I, and some of them I haven't done in a really long time and some are designs that I just keep doing over and over. It seems to change with the seasons and some of them come back and are popular again. Yeah. Things like apples right now.

I've been doing a ton of those for back to school. those are, I think either \$3.25 or \$3.50 a piece. So it's not, they're not totally round cake pops, but it's not that far from a sphere it requires a little bit of sculpting and some extra add-ons, circus animals, those hover somewhere around \$3.75 to \$4 a piece.

The tiny cakes are my favorite. Uh, one of my favorites, they just look like little tiny birthday cakes and people get really excited about those, especially, you know, I've sold a ton of those, uh, since I closed during the pandemic and then reopened in June when, a lot of Georgia's businesses reopened.

And I've sold a ton of birthday sets because people still aren't having big parties, but they do you want to do something special or for someone's birthday? So a little 12 piece set of cake shaped cake pops has been a win and those have been really fun to make.

David Crabill: [00:19:19] Well, what about something like the apples? I know that's more of a basic design, but it's still definitely a custom shape with some added elements. And I wanted to ask about the amount of time it's taking to create these cake pops. Like if you were to say, create an order of three dozen of them, what sort of time would it be take for you to make that order?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:19:44] The problem is that it's never a start to finish thing for me because typically I do all the cake baking on Sunday. And so it's the cake baking rolling usually either Sunday night or on Monday, depending on what kind of week I have with the orders. And so that is not taken into account.

In, you know, let's say I'm going to sit down and make the 36 Apple cake pops. I'm not in my mind thinking about what I did on Sunday and Monday to prep myself for that. I mean, I

probably spend maybe an hour and a half in prep for the week if I'm doing like, maybe a hundred cake pops that week. Um, That would be baking all the cakes, mixing all the cakes, rolling all the cake balls.

That might be it that's if I'm not getting interruptions from the kiddo,

David Crabill: [00:20:34] Well, let's say, I mean, I, I, somebody who makes cake pops is probably going to be familiar with the process of getting into a basic cake pop. But like, from there, let's say you have the balls ready to go. That's the prep right now. What does it take to go from that ball to an Apple in terms of time?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:20:53] I'm guessing, like I'd probably budget an hour and a half for it, with those specifically, In my mind, I know that I can do 12 round cake pops in about half an hour, start to finish some and sometimes 24 or maybe 36 in an hour. If I'm moving really, really fast, if it's literally just the same color of chocolate that I'm dipping in.

And I'm not having any issues. So as, as we move away from that, it gets trickier and I'm not doing the same design every day. So it's hard to remember. Okay. you know, when I do apples, it's always going to take this long. Um, I basically work during nap time or during my daughter's nap time. So I get about two hours a day to work and I book my orders now based on that.

and so like this week, as I'm looking at my calendar I've got 18 Harry Potter cake pops that I plan to do during that, that hour and a half to two hour window that I have. But then the next day I've got 2 dozen round cake pops and 16 honey jar shaped cake pops that I'm hoping to do in that two hour window.

David Crabill: [00:22:05] So, what are your current weekly orders looking like? Do you get booked up or do you always, you know, keep a lot of room in your schedule?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:22:17] pretty quickly before I would book up four to six weeks in advance.

And now it's more like two to three weeks, but what I've learned to do, I think it's about a year ago. So what I offer on my website is something called cake pops ASAP. It is a separate section of designs that I can make pretty quickly, and that have a pretty high profit margin for me. And those are great for when someone contacts me on Sunday or Wednesday and says, Hey, can I, can I get cake pops for this Friday?

It's my daughter's birthday. and I can direct them to there. If I do have the availability, I can say I can make any of these six designs that are here and I've got those available through the website as like a, a direct purchase. So I don't have to generate an invoice for them. I don't have to do all the things that you would normally do with a custom order.

And if I have the time for it, You know, let's say the 10 hours that I budgeted, I really only needed eight hours to get the work done. It has worked out really well for me and for these clients that in the past, that would have just had to say like, I'm sorry, I'm booked. So Like I've learned to limit the options sooner than I used to. It's really saved me time.

David Crabill: [00:23:32] Now, when it comes to the designs and people ordering are, you know, people typically asking for custom designs? I know you have this cake pops ASAP, but are you typically creating new designs for a client or are they just. You, you know, looking through your pictures and saying, I want that one. How does that typically work?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:23:53] It has, it's gotten to the point now, now I'd say a few years ago it was probably more custom work. I offer so many designs now, or there so many out there that I've done that they're showing me pictures of work that I've done before? Like, Hey, can you do this circus set that I saw you do? Or they'll send me a picture that someone else has done and I'll show them.

Like, Oh, well, here's my version. I can't even, some, the Harry Potter cake pops. Someone sent me a picture of somebody else's set that I think was actually a copy of my set. And I was able to say, you know, I can, I can do those here. Here's what the original set looks like. This is my version. What do you think?

and that has happened a lot. Recently, cause people don't, for whatever reason, they don't think to look through the gallery. First they're looking on Pinterest or on Instagram or just Google they'll do a search for whatever their party theme is and then just send the pictures.

David Crabill: [00:24:55] Do you have any kind of ballpark estimate on how many designs you've created over the years?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:25:02] I mean probably thousands, at least hundreds. I mean eight years of design.

David Crabill: [00:25:09] Just from, just from looking at Facebook and your website? I would, I would think it was be easily over a thousand for sure. Yeah. Yeah. It's pretty incredible to see. And what we were talking about pricing, I just did want to touch on, I saw that the upside down versions of your cake pops cost a little bit more, and I wanted to ask about why that would be.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:25:34] Sure the way that I make cake pops, I am so used to rolling the cake ball, you know, dip the stick in chocolate, then dip the chocolate coated, stick in the cake ball, put it in the cake, pop stand, let it dry, come back and dip it. I've gotten so efficient in doing that. It's almost mindless and that's why that's the cheapest version for me to turn them upside down.

It adds an extra, really a couple of steps, Yes right after I insert the stick, um, of just leaving the cake ball and the cake, the lollipop, stick on the cake, pop stand to just cool and harden. I have to, to reinforce it, what will become the base of the cake pop by adding more chocolate so that it doesn't.

if you just, if you dip the cake, pop it in the chocolate and put it right on the wax paper. Sometimes the chocolate is so thin that the bottom of the cake pop is exposed and you end up with cracking and leaking and you can see the cake ball. So it has to be reinforced. And then you've got the element of trying to make the stick look straight, perpendicular to the surface that it's on.

So it just takes a lot more time sometimes almost double the time if I'm having a rough day. So that's why it's slightly more, there are a lot of people that the standard offering is the upside down cake pop, and it's probably faster for them and that's more efficient. But for me, I don't do a lot of them.

It's easier to display. And that's why some clients ask for it because you don't have to worry about a cake pop stand. You can just put them on a tray and they're good to go. But, The increase is for the time and the, the hassle

David Crabill: [00:27:18] I also notice that you do like cake balls. With no stick whatsoever. And are those more expensive as well?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:27:28] they are because then I have to take the stick out. It's made the same way that a standard cake pop is made, but then I have to go back and really carefully twist the stick out and then cover that hole with chocolate and then let it set on wax paper to cool. So it's another, not labor intensive, but it takes extra time.

And then every once in a while you get one that cracks from when you're trying to remove this stick. So they look beautiful when they're done, but it does take more time.

David Crabill: [00:27:59] now when it comes to design, I did want to ask you if there's ever been a design, cause you do have done an elaborate number of designs, like some designs that are a little bit mind blowing, but has there ever been a design that somebody requested that you just couldn't do?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:28:15] It's more of that. I, I won't do, I probably could make, make it work, whatever they've asked, but I, I draw the line on anything. That's scary. Like I don't do zombies. I don't do the things that just. That look scary. And I've got a pretty weak stomach because I'm going to be looking at whatever the reference is for a decent period of time, as I sculpt the cake pop.

And a lot of my brand is cute and happy and I, I just don't want to do zombies or, I've had some game of throne requests, Yeah, nothing scary, nothing. X-rated I've had, you know, some bachelorette party requests that I'm like, Nope, not doing that. And then I've got some discontinued designs that I have made that, um, they were such a pain that I just, I'm not going to make them again.

David Crabill: [00:29:09] What's an example of a discontinued design?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:29:12] Yeah, a margarita glasses. I made those, I made a lot of those for a while, and those were somewhere between six and \$7 a piece and they looked great, but they were really top heavy and had a pretty high failure rate. So I, I was like, you know, you could just, you could get margaritas, I mean, actual margaritas cheaper than what I can make this cake pop for.

So why don't you just treat your guests to that? people I used to do, portraits, like for wedding parties, I did a lot of one direction cake pops, for a time. And I've just discontinued that it gets to be too, too stressful for me to recreate likenesses. octopus cake pops. That

was another one that was a really neat to look at, but a pretty high failure rate. So I don't do those anymore.

David Crabill: [00:30:04] So you have these kind of remarkable. Sculpted designs and then you dip them and they look amazing, but then you also add this decoration to them and you become a very, very highly skilled decorator. And I just was looking at, you know, cake, you actually make birthday cake, cake pops, or there are some regular cake pops that have piping all the way around them. And it looks. Like near perfect piping. And I was wondering like, how, like, how does that work? Is that just your skill? Are you holding that in your hand? Do you put it on like a, something that rotates the cake pop? What are you doing in that?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:30:48] I hold the stick in my hand, as I pipe with the melted chocolate, what's worked best for me is to make a piping bag out of parchment paper, just a parchment paper cone. That'll put the melted chocolate in, and use that to pipe, whatever design I might turn. You know, if it's a. A three dimensional cake, pop where I'm piping all around and literally just turning the cake pop stick with my hand, you know, with my left hand, as I pipe with my right hand I'm I seem to be only good at piping chocolate.

I have tried decorating sugar cookies and you'd think that it would be a transferrable skillset, but it's not for me. I cannot, Understand the flow of Royal icing. And it's just a disaster. I usually end up just coating the cookie with the back of a spoon because it just doesn't work.

David Crabill: [00:31:42] I would bet that, you know, with practice, you would be pretty good at decorating cookies as well. But I did want to ask you're exclusive cake pops, right?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:31:52] Yeah, pretty much. I'll do some things, other things that are dipped in chocolate, like rice Krispies treats or pretzel rods, Oreos, those types of things. But, um,

David Crabill: [00:32:02] Okay. So exclusively cake pops or anything on a stick.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:32:06] Yeah. Yep.

David Crabill: [00:32:07] is that something that you intentionally decided to do? Did that just kind of happen? I mean, most people in your realm would go into making a custom cake for someone if they request it. Have you gotten those kinds of requests or is it just the way your business has the direction your business has moved in?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:32:28] I am not great at really anything else. And I'm, I'm okay with that. It would be nice, you know, down the road. If I, if sweet whimsy shop became more of a brand, you know, maybe with a storefront, I'm not really sure what that would look like, but I would definitely want to go into business with a partner who can do the other things that I can't, that I either just have no desire to do, or really cannot seem to grasp the concept of cakes.

I'm not super interested in. I think it's because they are so time consuming and it's one. It's one whole piece, you know, I think of a wedding cake. If you mess that up, that's a, the, you

can't, you can't remake it super fast. I like the small, fairly quick to make pieces of art, you know, that are edible and I've for whatever reason, I picked up the skill really quickly.

I've tried other like macarons. I've dabbled in it. I really love to eat them. It's not something that I picked up on really easily. And my personality is such that if I can't, if I can't almost master it pretty immediately, I kind of move on.

David Crabill: [00:33:39] So, what would you say to somebody who is interested in starting their own cake pop business? Do you just have to have that artist's skill within, or are these learned skills or are there things that you would recommend for someone who's trying to get their business off the ground?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:33:56] I think spending a lot of time practicing. You know, do your research, buy, buy books. I bought all of the [Bakerella's, how to books](#), read blogs read, you know, I've done some tutorials myself, and yeah, spend a lot of time practicing. And then starting, start with friends and family, you know, people that might give you honest feedback. If you can find those people in your life and make free cake pops for them in exchange for their feedback, I think that's a great way to get started. Um, that's kinda how, you know, I was making cake pops for free to begin with and I got really good feedback.

And my skill has gotten better through tons of practice. I get a lot of people mainly on Instagram asking, you know, how, how do you, how do I do this? Or how do you make it perfect or how. Um, my biggest reply is practice. I've been doing about a hundred cake pops a week for let's say eight years, at least.

And that's somewhere around like, I think 40,000 cake pops that I've made. So that's, that's a lot of practice. And so if you're just starting out, keep the expectations realistic. You're probably not going to make. You know, the Thomas, the train cake pops that took me hours to make, like, I mean, maybe you will, but it's unlikely and don't get frustrated.

And if this is your third time making cake pops ever, like, keep the expectations realistic, you just keep practicing.

David Crabill: [00:35:26] Well, what about cake pop supplies? Like what's like a starter set for somebody who's getting going. What do they need? What are the bare essentials?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:35:36] Yeah, pretty basic. Um, it's an easy thing to get started on. Uh, you need lollipop sticks. You need some sort of [chocolate coating. Merckens](#) I use a lot of Merckens, but you can find Wilton and Make'n Mold at just about any craft store. Like Michael's even Walmart. I think target carries some small packs of them and you need a cake and frosting and you can either use the box cake mix and canned frosting, or use your own recipe for both and sprinkles, if you want something on top, but it's pretty, pretty easy to get started.

Um, During the pandemic, when it first started, I think in maybe March or April, a local news station and asked me to do a make at home, like a tutorial on how to make cake pops at home with what you have on hand. And it was pretty, pretty easy to tell people how to get started. Um, you can actually even use a mug cake recipe, just Google mug cake and make a

single serving of cake in a mug and mix it with a tiny bit of frosting and go from there. If, if you don't have lollipop sticks on hand, you could use, straws or even wooden skewers. And if you don't have. A Wilton or Make'n mold candy coating on hand, you can use chocolate chips, you can mix it with some coconut oil to thin it a bit or almond bark. That's another good medium to coat it. So there's, there's a lot of ways if you're just dabbling at home, there are things you can do to make your own cake pops with what you have.

David Crabill: [00:37:09] And let's compare that to what the cake pop supply situation looks like right now in your household, what do you, what do you, what do you currently have in terms of supplies? I can imagine it's probably pretty immense.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:37:24] It's a lot. I. Our house has a massive linen closet that I've converted to the cake pop supply closet, and I have clear shoe box size, plastic containers with just about every color of candy coating or chocolate coating that you could get. And then I probably have maybe 12 of those. And then I have bigger bins.

I have more, some bins that are that size that have sprinkles grouped by color, and then some bigger bins that have like my pink and white sprinkles are in a really big bins, because I have a lot of those. And I, I mean, it takes. I don't even know it's, it's embarrassing how much I have. It's mostly just chocolate coating and sprinkles.

And then I do I'll keep on hand. I'll keep M&Ms. You can use those for a lot of different things. Like a Teddy bear ear or wings on little chicks. chocolate chips is another good one to have on hand. Those can be ears for horses or horns for. Dinosaurs. and then you can do a lot with marshmallows.

You can cut them into different shapes. those can also be ears. What are some other mediums that I use. Oh, you can make marshmallow. I make marshmallow fondant with the marshmallows and we'll sometimes use that to make, like I make a little hot chocolate mug that has a handle that's made out of marshmallow fondant and then the unicorn horns that I make are made out of marshmallow fondant.

David Crabill: [00:38:53] So, what would you say? You said that some of these designs, they kind of keep coming up over and over again. so you have some popular designs, but what are also some of your favorite designs?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:39:05] Definitely love the unicorns, which is also still pretty popular, which I'm okay with. Love making those love, making the tiny cakes, which have been really popular because of the at-home birthday celebrations and then anything. Do you know what kawaii, when I say that word, kawaii is just sort of a style of, it's like the happy faces with the little eyes and there's usually rosy cheeks. A lot of my designs. If I can put a face on it, a kawaii style face, I get really excited about that. Like the hot chocolate mugs. I have little ghosts that have these cheery faces and I think candy corns is I got a few Halloween designs that have faces on them.

So anything I can put a face on and make it look super cute. I get excited about. Girly stuff. I don't, sadly, I don't love, what I call boy designs, you know, like power, I've done power ranger, cake pops, and I just don't get as excited about those. I'll do them. And I know that,

you know, the moms who order them are super excited, but, they're not quite as cute and certainly not very pink.

David Crabill: [00:40:13] Well, let's transition to how you actually market your business. You certainly have the skills, but that doesn't necessarily mean much if you can't actually get business. So what have you done to grow your business over the years?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:40:29] Biggest thing is social media. Really Instagram that has I've had them the greatest following on Instagram. Um, I'm slowly building my Facebook base, which that's what translates to more orders for me, not so much Instagram. Those have been the two biggest avenues for me, marketing word of mouth.

Certainly when I first started rebuilding business here in Savannah, connecting with those event planners was really helpful and really connecting with any kind of small business owner. Locally, I feel like you're just doing organic marketing. You know, your name might come up if someone's planning a party or, you know, someone has a baby shower.

I haven't paid for any sort of, you know, marketing help, although I've certainly considered it. It's mostly been, I guess what I'd call organic uh, which I'm grateful for.

David Crabill: [00:41:23] Well, it helps that your designs are very Instagram worthy, but you also do a nice job of photographing them. So what, what have you learned in that? in terms of photographing your cake pops in a nice way?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:41:37] I, I try to do it at, in the afternoon. That happens to be when the sun is best in our house, based on the way that it's rising and falling over our windows. So getting natural light is really good. I try to have everything finished before the sun goes down so I can get for that day so I can get pictures.

Otherwise, you know, it's nine or 10:00 PM and the photos that's just gonna, sometimes you can't even edit it. At least I can't, I can't make it look good. So having good, good daytime light is really helpful. I have just used my iPhone when I started out, I was using my, my Canon SLR to. Take photos to take upload them into the computer edit them.

But again, that was on Etsy. And most of that was in 2012. So smartphones, were they even, I don't think they were even a thing then, and I don't know you weren't using your phone to take pictures. It was very different then, and I was uploading photos on my computer to my Etsy site. So it was. It made more sense, but now, because of time, I take a picture with my iPhone.

I use an app within my iPhone to edit it and then post it through Facebook, Instagram, whatever social media.

David Crabill: [00:42:51] Yeah. I've noticed that you've been posting regularly as well. It's not just that you're taking pictures of maybe every order you, you make. I don't know, but it seems like you're also constantly posting on social media.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:43:04] I've tried. I've tried at least with Facebook. I've tried to get a post in a day. From what I understand, you need to be doing more than that and you need

to be interacting more with your followers. But I, I'm not a social person by nature. I'm actually a pretty extreme introvert. So any form of interaction just exhausts me, even if it's virtual, I'd like to be at a point, and this is kind of where I've thought about hiring someone who loves to be on social media and interact with people.

Cause that's not something that brings me joy or life to post stuff, but I know that it's important to be consistent so that at least once a day, there's something new on my. My Facebook feed and my Instagram feed. I wish that I was more spontaneous and felt better about posting stuff to stories on Instagram.

I've, I've read that that really boosts your. I guess the interactions or the number of times that people see your regular posts, but I just can't my mind doesn't think about that. I don't think, Oh, I've just finished this. Let me share this. So let me share this work in progress with people because I'm just not wired that way. I'm just introverted. Want to get the task done and move on.

David Crabill: [00:44:18] Yeah. As a fellow introvert, I understand. You know it's not. It's not always easy to do the social, but it is important to get your name out there. So has that been a difficult transition? Have you had to put yourself out there a lot more. And did you know that when you were going into this business?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:44:38] I had not thought about that at all. I just thought this is a way that I can sell cake pops. That was really where it ended. I wasn't really thinking about making this into a huge business. I wasn't thinking where's this going to go? It was more, I need to make money. I cannot, I can't continue teaching.

This is what I'm going to do. And it's just sort of evolved from there where, you know, I'm thinking a little bit more long-term and possibly a little bit more strategically. And it does require me to get out of my comfort zone too, like post tutorials and post work in progress videos. That's not my nature.

but I know that that generates a lot of buzz on social media, both even on Facebook, where I've got local people and on Instagram, where I've got people that, you know, that are probably cake pop makers as well, trying to pick up a new skill, I think that if I could post more of those types of videos, types of, I guess, informational content that would serve me better, but it is such a, it's a leap.

And then it also just really drains me because it's not it's, it's not what I love doing. I love making, not producing content.

David Crabill: [00:45:52] have there been any stories or any memorable things that have happened over the past decade that come to mind? Uh, things that stand out in your mind when running this business.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:46:08] Yes. You know, I made cake pops for The Late Late Show with James Corden. I think this was 2015 or 2016. I can't remember. Um, it was shortly after the show started. and one of the producers emailed me and I about making one direction cake

pops. Cause that, that had been something that I had stopped making at that point. But when I first started making cake pops, that was one of my most requested designs.

And I remember getting the email from the producer and showing it to my husband and going, I think this might be spam. Like why. Why would these people be contacting me? This is so weird. And you know, I kind of replied back, thinking you know, I'll give it a shot. And it actually was a producer from the show.

And that was, that was surreal, surreal to see my cake pops on TV, you know, to see James Gordon and the band members holding cake pops in their likenesses. Um, Different events that I've done. There's a Gulfstream, which manufactures private jets, has, a big facility here and they do a lot of different events and they did a Gatsby themed event two summers ago, I think, massive with crazy just when you think of great Gatsby like they recreated it. And they used my cake pops as part of it. And I saw pictures of it just was beautiful and it was a, it was a huge order for me. There were so many people at the event. And so it basically paid the bills for the next three months, just from that one event alone.

David Crabill: [00:47:39] Wow. Was that the largest order you've ever had?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:47:43] I think it was, it was, it was 700 cigar style, chocolate covered pretzels. Where I had like an edible image that looked like a cigar label that I put on them and then 700 cake pops. And I want to say it was around. Maybe \$4,000, which, that that's a really see, it took me, I think two weeks of prep. I made all the chocolate covered pretzels first and I actually delivered them to the caterer first.

Cause I just, I wanted them out of my house, to not be responsible for them. And then yeah, made the cake pops and I worked all hours, but it was worth it. Um, For that business, for that experience, definitely for the, for the money at that time of year, especially, I think that was my biggest order

David Crabill: [00:48:33] And I would imagine when you got this business started, you had no idea where it was going to take you.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:48:39] that's very true. Very true. Yeah. And the connections that I've made with people just all over the country, now it's more local obviously, but, it's been really cool to connect with different people.

David Crabill: [00:48:52] Have people come from a distance to get your cake pops. I mean, you've established such a name for yourself. Like, like how far have you delivered to, or have people picked up from.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:49:05] Yeah, since I've stopped shipping and they can only pick up or I'll deliver it to Savannah. And I've had, I had some former clients that I used to ship to who vacationed in Savannah she knew that I was here.

She loved Savannah. She said, I'm going to be in town. I'd like cake pops for my birthday. And also cake pops for me to take home to the office. And that was really flattering. Uh, she,

she flew on a plane to get here, so I, you know, it was not anywhere within driving distance. Um, and then I had a. A Baker, she bakes cakes and she makes pretty sure she bakes cakes.

I know she makes cookies. They were beautiful. I saw pictures of them, but she drove up, I think, five hours from Florida to pick up cake pops for her granddaughter's first birthday. So she made Swan cookies and then ordered my cake pops. And that was such a compliment because she's a professional Baker herself.

And for her to drive that way, you know, 10 hours. For, for the first birthday, just to have my cake pops, it was really meaningful.

David Crabill: [00:50:09] Wow. Yeah, well, probably because she's a professional Baker, she's one of those few people who would care. That much about their, their event, you know, you gotta, Yeah. Hmm. No, that's very cool.

Well, you touched on it a little bit earlier, but what, where are you planning on taking this business? I know you're slowing down because you have a baby on the way, but where would you maybe like to take it in the future?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:50:38] Yeah, I feel like I'm at this point where I need to be decisive about that. And I've looked at two different directions. And one is really leveraging my teaching background and offering online tutorials, courses, classes, that type of thing, and, and cutting back on the actual producing for clients and offering, offering my skillset as what is marketable.

or doing something potentially with a storefront, that would involve a partner for sure. And I, I still haven't made a decision. I'm sure I could do possibly both, but I, I feel like I need to start with one and then do the other and not try to do both at the same time. And it's probably going to be a while before the storefront for sure becomes a reality because I've got little ones at home and I really want to honor the time that we have with them here. and that for me means that I'm delaying the opening of a business or the transitioning from exclusively cottage food to something else. and I'm not sure what that would be. I would love to open a brick and mortar store that, you know, that has cute little treats, not just cake pops, but just like small macarons and different pastries.

You know, I would need a partner that has experience with that, or at least the passion to learn. Um, and as a place that people could come and sit with, you know, friends or loved ones and just have a really sweet experience, Feel welcomed, really inclusive. That's just been a big part of my vision is that it's a place that everyone feels special and we just have great customer service.

It's been important to me as a small business owner with clients that I work with. I've worked with all different types of clients from all backgrounds, and it's been important to me that. I can find a way to get them what they want to work with, whatever budget they have, because if they value, you know, what I have to offer, like that means a lot to me.

And if, if they can only afford, you know, \$27 for an order. Like let's make it work. You know, if they need to make two or three different payments before they pick up, like we will make

it work. It just, I really am big on inclusion and everyone deserves the right to feel special. And so I think having a storefront that facilitates, that would just be really, it would be really meaningful to me and hopefully to our community, people would have a place to feel included special.

David Crabill: [00:53:17] Well, I am looking forward to seeing where your business goes. It's certainly got a ton of potential and I'm sure it will be moving in some very, promising directions, you know, in the future. So, um, anyway, Ffor anybody who is interested in finding your stuff, how can people find you online or reach out and contact you?

Becca Aronowitz: [00:53:42] Sure. Um, my website is sweetwhimsyshop.com and you can find me on [Instagram](#) and on [Facebook](#) under @sweetwhimsyshop. And if you're on Instagram, specifically using the hashtag #savannahcakepops will probably generate my work. You might find a couple of other Savannah cake pop makers, but I don't think that there are many, those are the three big ones.

David Crabill: [00:54:09] Well, thank you so much. For coming on the show, Becca, I've truly enjoyed getting to see how you've built up this business and learning how you've made your cake pops.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:54:22] thank you. I've enjoyed the time. Yeah. It's nice to chat for sure.

David Crabill: [00:54:25] Yeah. All right. Thanks so much.

Becca Aronowitz: [00:54:27] Thanks, David.

David Crabill: [00:54:31] That wraps up another episode of the Forrager podcast. As I said, at the beginning of the episode, I really encourage you to check out [Becca's work on her website](#). You will definitely be impressed by what you see.

If you are thinking about starting a cottage food business, head on over to forrager.com to [check out your state's cottage food law](#).

For more information about this episode, go to forrager.com/podcast/19. Thanks for listening and I'll see you in the next episode.